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Celebrating the Dead

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Inspired by the millions of people around the world who are celebrating All Souls Day this year, the Radio New Internationalist dips into different cultures to hear the many ways in which the world's populations honour their dead and respect the dying. From the fear of the spirit-world underpinning Halloween to the burning of money at the tomb-sweeping festivals of Taiwan, the ways we celebrate death shape our own hopes and fears about dying.

- What better place to start than Mexico's Day of the Dead - a two day national celebration where bands, feasting and sugar-coated skulls go hand-in-hand to the cemetery. Author Mary Andrade takes us there.
- Just what human rights should we have as we die? It's an issue that literally gets buried with the body. Prominent Australian human rights lawyer, Julian Gardner, has had the rare experience of making decisions on behalf of people who are in the process of dying, and then living to tell the tale.
- On the cusp of celebrating Halloween - the night that the Irish believe the spirits can break back through to the world of the living - Jack Byrne from NEAR FM in Dublin shares some scary recollections.
- The three day mourning ceremony undertaken by Koreans can be gruelling on their families. After explaining the process before burial, a young Korean - Anna Alcon - weighs up the pros and cons of their mourning traditions in a story read by Vymala Yim.
- One of the benefits of religion is that it sets out a belief structure when someone dies. But ritual is not the sole province of the religious, as Dick Gross - the author of a modern guide to meaning and morality called Godless Gospel - explains.

The feature CD is by Benjamin Escoriza performing his first solo album Alevanta! or in English Rise Up! - an eerily appropriate title for today's program. 's a magical mix through which Moroccan influences jump across the Mediterranean to dance with flamenco.

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